

MONITOR

Warning to Youth Seen

Bulgarian Spy Trial Assessed

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Vienna

It has been some years since American missions in Communist Eastern Europe have been subjected to the demonstrative treatment as that which befell the legation in Sofia during the current trial of a former Bulgarian diplomat charged with spying for the United States.

The last occasion in fact was in the wake of the U-2 affair in the spring of 1960, and since then—after Moscow's first cautious wait-and-see period of new presidency of John F. Kennedy—the general process has been almost entirely in the opposite direction.

To varying degrees, all the Eastern European regime leaders have sought to improve relations and contacts with the United States. Bulgaria was no exception. American relations with Sofia were in fact renewed only five years ago after a 10-year interval of going back to American withdrawal in reply to Bulgarian allegations—subsequently quashed—against its minister there.

Six months ago, Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman, first American Cabinet officer ever to visit the new Sofia regime, was given the sort of VIP treatment reserved for the Soviet bloc's own potentates. Soon after, the American Minister, Mrs. Eugenie Anderson, appeared in a Sofia television program marking American Independence Day.

Bulgaria has sought American wheat as anxiously as any to make good deficiencies in its own agriculture and Soviet shipments.

The decision, therefore, to allow the trial of Prof. Ivan Asen Khristov Georgiev, one-time member of Bulgaria's permanent mission to the United Nations, to erupt into a public outburst of anti-American sentiment is against the stream of the past year and to that extent has Western diplomats weighing what it is all about.

The methodical manner of assembly made it clear the demonstration was a fully or-

ganized and officially intended affair.

Careful limits seem also to have been set. For example, one to two police on hand did not prevent the overturning of a legation car, but they did restrain one hothead who tried to siphon gas from the tank.

In response to legation calls, more police arrived—after the windows had been well and thoroughly shattered but in time to disperse the mob and terminate the demonstration before it got out of hand. There was no effort at molestation of legation personnel.

Two Sofia broadcasts as the Georgiev case opened offer clues as to real meaning of this show trial and its accompanying demonstration.

One was a dark warning against "Russian-speaking strangers" who if the commentator is to be taken seriously have successfully posed as Soviet citizens for spy purposes even to the extent of penetrating Bulgarian government offices.

In the other, a Communist youth leader, Nikola Georgiev, especially warned young people who had already yielded he said to "bourgeois Western influences."

This effort to exploit the diplomat-spy trial, therefore, looks very much like deep official concern at an extent to which Bulgarian youth—as this writer was able in some way to estimate on a visit to Sofia a few months ago—is responding to the possibilities of the new co-existence and the opportunities it means for more and open contacts with the West and visiting Westerners.

The trial and demonstration are clearly intended to revive old bogeymen and as a strong warning that co-existence has its limits; that these limits and the scope of contact permissible within it will be prescribed by official policy; and that any free-wheeling outside them is not going to be tolerated.

The handling of the Georgiev case, therefore, seems to have something in common with that of the Barghoorn case recently in Moscow. It certainly shows again the Communist world's wide interpretation of the term "espionage," for some of the accused man's supposedly trea-

sonable contacts might well have been no more than normal conversations any intelligent diplomat would seek.

It underlines also how thin can be the substance on which the co-existence policy is built. But normally such occasions have not been a pretext on which policy is changed as the Soviet conduct after the U-2 subsequently showed.

For their own Bulgarian reasons the Bulgarians have elected to dress up this trial in order to contrive their own deterrent so to speak before enthusiasm, especially of the youth, for the new wind of increased Western contact becomes dangerous.

It is unlikely to signify more. Once the broken windows on Sofia's Alexander Stambolisky Street are restored and paid for, the regime will, one suspects still be pursuing its own cautious further contact with the West.

Charges Denied

Special to The Christian Science Monitor
New York

In an exclusive interview with Radio Free Europe, Prof. Cyril Black of Princeton University branded as completely false Bulgarian Communist accusations that he was involved with Ivan Georgiev, Bulgarian diplomat now on trial in Sofia on charges of spying for the United States.

Professor Black's point-by-point denial of the Communist charges was given in a tape-recorded interview in the Bulgarian language and broadcast by RFE to the Bulgarian people.

Professor Black's father, Floyd Black, served as director

of the American College in Bulgaria. Cyril attended this school and is also well-known in Bulgaria.

The official indictment against Mr. Georgiev, published recently in the leading Bulgarian regime papers, named Professor Black as the principal American "spy" in contact with Mr. Georgiev and named places and dates which were said to have figured in meetings between the two men.

Professor Black stated categorically: "I have never met Mr. Georgiev on any occasion and had in fact never heard of him before the announcement of the trial on Dec. 21."